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## On The Waterfront: Ports' truck program a breath of fresh air

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Years ahead of schedule and with far less disruption than originally feared, the smoke-belching trucks once clogging local roadways are now largely a throat-burning, cough-inducing memory of a less environmentally minded era.

Air-quality regulators now report 93 percent of freight hauled by truck to and from local ports is handled by rigs spewing up to 90 percent fewer emissions than fleets serving the port just three years ago.

The remarkable turnover, which began in October 2008 under a joint plan between the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, has pushed onto local roadways 8,874 trucks meeting or exceeding federal 2007 emission standards.

That's up from less than 100 in 2007, when the plan was first roughly formulated.

Most striking is the rapid drop in truck-generated pollutants, including cancer-linked diesel soot. Authorities estimate diesel particulate matter and nitrogen oxides, a smog-forming pollutant, have dropped an estimated 80 to 85 percent since 2006.

The new rigs have also had the side benefit of reduced fuel consumption.

New rigs, maintained properly, average about one to two miles more per gallon than their predecessors, and that difference can lead to thousands of dollars in savings annually.

For a driver averaging 150 miles per day, a truck averaging 8 miles per gallon would slurp about 6.25 fewer gallons during the workday than a rig averaging 6 mpg.

At \$3.20 per gallon, that's about

an extra \$20 at the end of the day.

Multiply that by

250 workdays in a year and the savings jumps to about \$5,000.

Over the truck's expected life of 10 years or so, the fuel savings alone more than pay for the higher purchase, registration and tax costs.

Breakwater meeting

Nearly two decades after local residents began organizing to tear down (or punch holes in) the much-despised Long Beach Breakwater, their goal now appears less like a surfer's pipe dream than a tangible political reality.

The federal agency with ultimate control over the rock seawall's fate, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is meeting with many of the original organizers today in a public ceremony at Bluff Park to launch a four-year study deciding the breakwater's fate.

It took more than a decade of intense grass-roots lobbying and fundraising, but city officials agreed earlier this year to fund half of the \$8million study.

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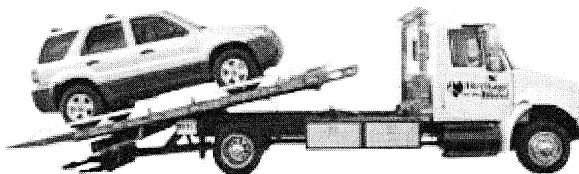
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The Corps is covering the other half.

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The review will center largely on the ecological and economic impact of removing or reshaping the 2.5-mile underwater seawall, which blocks most wave action from downtown to the Peninsula.

Constructed at the outset of World War II to protect the Navy's Pacific Fleet from Imperial Japan's submarines, the breakwater was useful in the post-war era, when the Navy established a huge base in Long Beach.

But its purpose in the city's post-Navy era (the Navy left town in the mid-1990s) is increasingly in question, particularly among the region's business leaders and lawmakers, who ultimately brokered a deal with the Army Corps to consider drastic changes.

Businesses in particular have played an increasingly active role in the anti-breakwater movement, buoyed by independent reports showing a revitalized tourism industry if the seawall is altered and waves return.

One report estimated at least \$52 million in annual revenue for local hotels, restaurants and shops, with an additional \$6 million to \$7 million in taxes and parking fees for the city annually.

Today's event begins at 10 a.m. at Bluff Park, Ocean Boulevard at Cherry Avenue, where Mayor Bob Foster will join Army Corps of Engineers Col. Mark Toy and local residents to mark the launch of the study.

To learn more, visit [www.lbsurfrider.org](http://www.lbsurfrider.org) or [www.longbeach.gov/](http://www.longbeach.gov/)

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